

**§ 106-564.4. Alternative method for collection of assessments relating to sweet potatoes.**

(a) In the event the producers of sweet potatoes approve an assessment pursuant to G.S. 106-564, which assessment shall be paid by the producer based on the number of acres produced, the producer shall report the number of acres planted and shall remit the assessment due to the Commissioner of Agriculture. Sweet potato producers shall report acreage planted at a time and place determined by the duly certified agency representing the producers of sweet potatoes.

(b) Assessments shall be due on September 1 of each year. Any producer who fails to pay assessments by September 30 of each year shall also pay a penalty of ten percent (10%) of the unpaid assessment, plus a penalty of one percent (1%) of the unpaid assessment for each month the assessment remains unpaid. The Commissioner of Agriculture shall remit all assessments received to the duly certified agency representing the producers of sweet potatoes. The duly certified agency representing the producers of sweet potatoes may conduct inspections and audits of sweet potato producers in order to verify the number of acres of sweet potatoes planted and may bring an action to recover unpaid assessments and penalties and the reasonable costs of such action, including attorneys' fees.

(c) There shall be no refund of assessments collected pursuant to this section.

(d) For the purposes of this section, "producer" shall be defined as a grower of one acre or more of sweet potatoes. (1995, c. 521, s. 2.)